Philadelphus
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THE STATE OF THE Philadelphian Society.

OR

The Grounds of their Proceedings Consider'd;

IN

Answer to a Letter from

PHILALETHES,

Upon occasion of the *Theosophical Transactions*, &c. to a Member of that Society.

EZEK. xii. 23.

Say unto them, The Days are at Hand, and the Effect of every Vision.

LONDON:

Printed for the Booksellers of *London* and *Westminster*, 1697.

Advertiſement.

THis Letter of *Philalethes*, both as coming from an Unknown Hand, and requiring ſuch a Publick Anſwer, the Perſon to whom it was Addreſs'd, as well as the Reſt who are Concern'd in the Name of the Society, tho' moſt willing to give Satisfaction unto All, did ſee the Neceſſity to refrain from certain Particular Informations, (which yet hereafter may be produc'd) of the Preſent State of the Same, either in this Kingdom, or Elſewhere; and that the more becauſe of ſome Wrong, and Dangerous Applications that have been already made by ſome, againſt the Undertakers of Their *Tranſactions*, or *Acta Philadelphica*.

And whereas it may be Objected againſt the Calculation, *p.* 27. that ſome who have much ſtudy'd this Matter, do yet protract the Time for Seventy Years; even that will not

not be Material, though likewiſe no more be meant by the Cleanſing the Sanctuary, then the Firſt *Viſible* Beginnings of it; by the FALL of That which has *Polluted* it. For if the Alarm was given to the Old World an Hundred and Twenty Years before it was Accompliſh'd; Seventy Years may not ſeem to be ſo long Now to Warn and Awaken the Slumbering Nations, to prevent the Impendent Judgments that will certainly overtake them, unleſs they Repent, and prepare to meet their Saviour.

As for what is Herein more Peculiarly Addreſs'd to *One* Communion among *Proteſtants*, the Argument does equally (yea *a fortiori*) preſs the Divided Communions from it in this Kingdom, and in *Ireland*.

THE

THE STATE OF THE Philadelphian Society.

SIR,

UPON occaſion of thoſe *Philadelphian* Papers, and *Theoſophical Tranſactions* that fly about, we are often ask'd in the City, both by our Friends in Converſation, and by others that are Inquiſitive or Scrupulous. *What* theſe *Philadelphians* are; this new Sect with a hard Name? What are their peculiar Principles or Practiſes? How are they diſtinguiſh'd from other Chriſtians, and particularly from thoſe of the Church of *England* on the one Hand, and from the *Quakers* on the other? Why do they ſeperate from us, and affect Singularity and a particular Title? with many ſuch Queſtions which we cannot well Anſwer, for want of a full Account of the true State of this Society. I Anſwer theſe Queſtions as well as I can, but am ſenſible that I want Inſtructions to give a full Anſwer to ſome of them. I tell them they differ not from the Proteſtant Churches as to external Communion; they do not refuſe Communion with them, either in hearing the Word, or receiving the Sacraments, and therefore make no Schiſm. But, ſay they, why then do theſe *Philadelphians* make their ſeparate Meetings, and on *Sundays*, in time of Divine Service in Our Churches? I could not well anſwer that Queſtion, and therefore leave it to you.

As to their difference from the *Quakers*, I told them, they were not so silly as to place Religion in *Thouing* and *Theeing*, in keeping on their Hats, or in a *sad Countenance*, as the Hypocrites had in our Saviour's time. These have no external Badge or Mark of distinction, but are above those little Affectations or Superstitions. Very well say they, but do they not agree with the *Quakers*, as to the internal Principle of a Light within, and a private Spirit of Revelation or Inspiration? I could not fully answer to this, which you better understand, and can inform us in.

Then as to their peculiar Principles, I told them I knew none but that single Opinion, That the *Coming of Christ was near at Hand*; and therefore they think it their Duty to warn and awaken the World, that they may prepare for that great and solemn Time, by a good Life, universal Charity, and Union amongst the Protestant Churches. Very well, said they, This is good Advice, and at all times seasonable. But what Grounds have they to believe and Affirm that the coming of Christ is near at Hand. I confest to them I did not remember any Proof or Grounds they have given us of their Judgment in this particular, neither could I discern from what Topicks they would fetch their Evidence. I consider'd with my self, seeing this is a thing that cannot be found out by Reason, they must come to the knowledge of it either by private Revelation, or by publick Revelation, such as is made to us all in Scripture. If they have it, or pretend to have it by private Revelation, they must give us some Assurance, (by Miracles, or some other way) that this is no Fiction or Delusion of theirs, but a real Inspiration from the Divine Spirit. They know how many have deceiv'd themselves, or have deceiv'd others by such Pretences; and therefore they ought to be more careful what they Vent and Affirm in this kind. 'Tis a bold and presumptuous a Thing to father our Thoughts upon the Spirit of God, and obtrude them upon the World under that sacred Notion, without sure Evidence.

If they appeal to the written Word of God, we are always ready to be govern'd by that Rule, and desire them to name those Texts of Scripture that declare, or from whence it may be collected, that the coming of Christ is at Hand. We know there are several places of Scripture that spoke (according to a literal common Construction) of that Coming of Christ, as near in the Apostles time, but those places cannot now be of use to them in this Case. As to the Prophesies in the Revelations of St. *John*, what is said

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in the 11 and 16th. Chapters, ſeems rather to make againſt them. Several things there mentioned muſt be accompliſh'd before the coming of our Saviour. In the 11th. Chapter the Witneſſes muſt riſe, and after their Reſurrection muſt Aſcend, and the tenth part of the City muſt fall, and the 2d. *Wo* muſt paſs away before the 7th. Trumpet ſound, and even in that, there is a *Woe* before the Bleſſed Times come on. In the 16th. Chapter the Vials of God's Wrath are poured out, and whether any of them be already paſt, is a diſputable Point amongſt the beſt Interpreters; much leſs do we know what diſtance is requir'd betwixt the effuſion of one Vial and another. It is alſo neceſſary that they ſhould fix the beginning of the Reign of Anti-Chriſt, and thoſe other *Epocha*'s that ſeem to be Contemporary with it, before they can Chronologically compute the time of our Saviour's coming. And you know ſome perſons of late have not had ſuch ſucceſs in their Prophetical Predictions and Calculations, as to encourage others to venture upon the ſame Deſign, without good Warrant. I will not mention to you the Converſion of the *Jews*, which is uſually look'd upon as Antecedent to the coming of Chriſt. But if you make the ſeven Churches (as you ſeem to do) to repreſent 7 Periods in the Chriſtian Church, we are not yet in the laſt Period, nor in the Penultimate. For ſuppoſe the *Philadelphian* ſtate to be coming on, there is ſtill a *Laodicean* Period after that, which muſt have its time and duration, how great or how little we cannot define.

Theſe Conſiderations are obvious to every one that reflects upon the Queſtion concerning the Diſtance or Approach of our Saviours coming. And it ſeems neceſſary that the *Philadelphian Society* (both for their own ſatisfaction, and the ſatisfaction of others) ſhould diſtinctly ſtate and explain theſe things, before they alarm the World, and expoſe themſelves and theſe myſteries of Providence to miſtaken Conſtructions. If you pleaſe to Print this Paper with your Anſwer to it, when you have occaſion, you will Oblige,

Sir,

Your Humble Servant;

Philalethes.

THE
ANSWER.

SIR,

WHen I received your Letter, I was not a little pleas'd at the Candour and Generosity of it on one side: and the more I consider'd how hard you press the Philadelphians on the other side, my Pleasure still encreased, with my Admiration, to find that there are not wanting some, who then when they make the most Vigorous Attack, are able to do it without losing so much as one Grain of the True Christian Temper. For it must needs be own'd, that you have not only fallen upon the True Knot of the Question; but that you have manag'd it with all the Dexterity, and Solidity, that it is possible I think for the Matter to bear.

I freely acknowledge that the Difficulties by you either Propos'd or Imply'd, are weighty: I acknowledge there are knots not easily to be Solv'd. But because I perceive that you are a sincere Lover of Truth, (according to the Name which you take) greatly concern'd for the Honour of Religion, very desirous to be Inform'd about the Pretensions of the *Philadelphian Society*, and to know what Answers are to be made both to the *Inquisitive* and the *Scrupulous*, concerning the true State of this Society, and the Grounds of their Appearance at this Time; I count my Self however oblig'd to give you what satisfaction I can *at present* in this grand Matter, and in the same Manner which you have desir'd it. Wherefore I shall first tell you, *What these Philadelphians are.*

You know that *Philadelphia* was, (and is still) a City in the lesser *Asia*; call'd by the *Turks* at this Day, *the City of God*, which is in their Language *Allahscheir*. But upon what Ground it is so call'd, I leave you to Inquire. It is the sixth, you know of those seven Cities, the Seats of so many Churches, to which the Lord after his Ascension wrote so many Epistles, full of deep and secret Truths, *hard to be understood.* Whence there is this continual Call, *He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear, what the SPIRIT saith unto*

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the Churches, or unto all the Ages, Periods and Succeſſions thereof; as the beſt Interpreters do gather. For not unto them alone were theſe Prophetical Epiſtles, as we believe, addreſs'd: but unto all that ſhould come after them; even to us, (though *afar off* both with reſpect to *Place*, and *Time*) and to the Generations which are yet to follow us, and to all that the Lord ſhall call. You know that the Church of Philadelphia is of all the ſeven repreſented as without Fault or Blame, yet of very low, and mean eſteem in the World; having at firſt but a little *Strength*, Power or Splendor, and ſo oblig'd to paſs through a moſt ſevere Probation, beyond all others, and to undergo all manner of Contempt and Ignominious Treating, even from thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be Chriſtians: and ſhall have greater Outward Power and Strength. For it is expedient that its Members be Try'd whether they will keep the word of the Patience of Jeſus; whether they will boldly Confeſs, and not *Deny* his Spirit, or *Name*; and whether they will ſo hold faſt unto the end, as not to ſuffer any to ſupplant or deprive them of their *Crown*, or of thoſe high Prerogatives which are peculiarly promis'd to the Conquerors in this State or Period. You know that *Love* is the Chriſtian Badg, and that main diſtinguiſhing Character, whereby the Primitive Chriſtians were diſcern'd from all the Sects and Religions which were then in the World: and that by an Alluſion, which is moſt uſual in Scripture, *Philadelphia* is ſet to expreſs *Brotherly Affection*. If You pleaſe to read the Charter of *Philadelphianiſm* in the *Epiſtle* to that Church, you may thence beſt be able to underſtand what a *True Philadelphian is*: and to diſcern the proper Marks and Characteriſticks of an *Angel* of this Church.

'Well, but you will juſtly ſay to me, where is there ſuch a 'Church as this upon the Earth? Is it among you? No: ye your'ſelves do not pretend that you are either Infallible, or Impecca'ble. You cannot ſay that you are without Fault or Blame, but 'on the contrary, do own your ſelves to ſtand in *much Weak'neſs and Imperfection* on one Hand, and in *much ſuperfluity and mix'ture* on the other. And where will you find ſuch Angels, or '*Paſtors*, as may have the Care of ſuch an *Holy* and *True* Church? 'Where are theſe Pillars of the *Philadelphian* Temple? Theſe con'quering Worthies that have endur'd out the Hour of Temptati'on? Theſe Prieſts that do truly bear upon them the Name of 'God, and of Chriſt, and of the City of God? Admit it be

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'true, that the *Old Philadelphian* Church in the *Lydian Asia* might 'challenge these great Things: admit also that all these Promises 'may be extended to future Successions in the Church, and that 'there is such a *Philadelphian* State or Æra to be expected, that 'may excell the former, as the Antitype doth the Type, yet 'what is all this to that *New Sect with an hard Name*, which is Here 'started up this present Year?

What are These Philadelphians?

These are to be known *What* they are, if you behold the first Draught, for which they have sat: and do examine the Claims which they make to the Charter that I have before refer'd you to. Wherefore if you will pass a right Judgment on the Copy, I must send to you the Original, to compare it by. And here you will do a most excellent Service; for which I my Self, and as many as are concerned with me in this truly Great Design, shall be oblig'd to thank you, and to own it for the most Meritorious Act of *Fraternal Love*; if you please but to discover the Defects of the Copy, so that they may be Corrected, and the Copy made perfectly conformable to its Original. Or if it should appear to you, even Wholly, and Fundamentally, Defective, I entreat you good *Philalethes*, whoever you are, to propose any other Model, that may better serve all the Ends of Religion in General, or those which this particular Society in *England*, have had a more principal Regard to, in their Establishment. For the *Ends* which they have set before 'em, (and whereof they have given an Account to the World in their *Reasons*, and *Propositions* lately Publish'd, and also in other Books, and Epistles) are so desirable, and so very Justifiable, that I have not yet found any that have so much as offer'd to condemn them: however they may have thought the Methods recommended for the attaining of these Ends to be Improper and Inadequate, or the Ends themselves not to be Attainable in this Life. Wherefore it deserves thoroughly to be examin'd into: whether these Ends (such as, the *Gifts* and *Graces* of the Blessed Spirit of God in a perfect and mature State,) be attainable in this Life, as these *Philadelphians* seem to expect? Or if in this Life they be not Attainable, whether it may not be yet requisite to press forward, as if they were Attainable, in order to the Attainment of them in another? Also whether the Re-union

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of the divided and scatter'd Limbs of Christianity, an Universal Peace and Amnesty among contending Brethren, the Conversion of the Jews, the call of the *Turks* and other Infidels, the Recovery of the Apostacy, the Renovation of all things, and such like, be not great and glorious Ends, worthy of a true Discipleshood of JESUS CHRIST, and most fit by all that profess his Name to be Pray'd for, and endeavour'd after, to their utmost Ability? Also whether the Methods which the *Philadelphian Society* have propos'd be proper and Adequate to these Ends of their Institution and Foundation?

By the Designs which any one has, and by the Methods which he takes to compass them, we can judge what he is. So in like manner you may hereby without much Difficulty collect *What* these Philadelphians are; and especially if they may be suppos'd to be Sincere in their Designs, and to follow the best Methods which are made known to them. Which I believe you will find no Reason to Question.

Wherefore you may rectifie the several strange Mistakes, that are commonly Entertain'd concerning *these Philadelphians*, as if they were a New Religion started up in the World, a new *Sect*, a Cabal, and I know not what besides. For I assure you they heartily lament the Divisions of *Christendom*, and especially of that Part of it which professes the *Reformation*: and they are utterly Averse to all Sectarianism, and Partiality in Religion, though even upon a pretence of higher Purity. Whence it is, as you rightly observe, that they differ not from the Protestant Churches, as to External Communion. Wherefore whenever this Question shall be again put to you by any, whether your Friends or others, you may answer them to this Effect: 'They are a Religious Society for the Refor-'mation of Manners, for the Advancement of an Heroical Chri-'stian Piety, and Universal Peace and Love towards All: who 'though they are deeply sensible of great Corruptions and Devi-'ations in most, or all, of the Christian Bodies, or Communities, 'from the *Apostolical Rule*; yet do not therefore formally Dissent, 'or separate from such a particular Body, Community, or Church 'in which they have before liv'd according to the best of their Light, 'and Understanding: much less do they perswade others to Dis-'sent from that Communion, which they are Previously oblig'd to 'Adhere to, or advise them to *Separate* themselves upon this Ac-'count, or upon any other: And though they meet *once* upon eve-

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'ry Lord's Day to implore the good Spirit of God Unitedly for 'the effecting of all the aforelaid Ends in the Fulneſs of the 'times, and particularly for a propitious Anſwer to all the 'Prayers and Interceſſions then at the ſame time offer'd up, in all 'Churches and Aſſemblies of Chriſtians throughout this Kingdom, 'and throughout the World, which are ſent up with a right In-'tention, and according to his Bleſſed Will; yet do they not e-'ſteem their meeting ſo together to be a proper Breach of the U-'nity with their *particular* Church, which they would ſtill main-'tain: but as the moſt Authentick and Declarative Act which they 'can make of their Unity with the *Catholick* Church, and of the '*Communion of Saints*, which they do aſſert to be here Experienc'd 'among them, even after a *Senſible*, (though Spiritual) Manner. I do not ſay, that thus it is: neither do I hereby at preſent maintain that it is a Real and Declarative Act of Communion with the Catholick Church, or that it ought to be ſo look'd on. For that depends upon the right ſtating of the Nature of the Catholick Church, (about which the preſent Chriſtian World, whether *Greek* or *Roman*, *Proteſtant* or *Evangelical*, is ſo greatly Puzled) and of the *Formal* Reaſon of Communion with it, and of the different Degrees of this Communion, with the various Modes and Expreſſions of the ſame: And (in ſome Meaſure) upon the *Eſteem* which they themſelves have of it, or that others have of it; or that any Prudent Perſon may be ſuppos'd to have, when the Matter of Fact is truly known, and the Principles and Grounds of the Fact fairly exhibited: And laſtly upon the ſolution of ſome other Intricate Queſtions, which others are as much oblig'd to Anſwer, as the *Philadelphians*. I will not therefore now maintain their Meetings upon ſuch Principles, and for ſuch Ends, as they do hold them, to be Poſitive and Real Acts of Catholick Communion: But I do ſay, that there are not wanting many favourable Preſumptions and Motives, to incline one, upon due Conſideration, to believe that they are ſo; and that have actually inclin'd *theſe* to believe ſo, who are altogether Diſintereſted one Way, or the other, and not Inſincere in the ſearch after Truth; neither quite ſo Incapable to judge of its Criterions, and Signs, as ſome would have 'em to be. And I do only deſire every ſober Chriſtian, that loves the Truth, which is after God, not to condemn ſuch their meeting together, though upon *one* part of the Lord's Day, as a Breach of Eccleſiaſtical Communion, untill they

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ſhall have thoroughly examin'd the *Preſent State* of the Chriſtian Churches, or at leaſt ſo far as may be requiſite in order to paſs a Judicial and Definitive Sentence in this Caſe. I know that you, Philalethes, are of too Free and Noble a Spirit to deny me this Requeſt: and what you can't Approve, (as I would not have you, or indeed any, to do without a Rational and Solid Conviction) you will not Inſtantly Condemn: but will ſuſpend your Cenſure, till the Matter upon which this Caſe depends can be ſufficiently Clear'd. But to return from this Digreſſion, I proceed to tell you.

That this Society of Philadelphians are not for *turning the World upſide down*, as ſome have Repreſented 'em: they are not Enemies to the Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Rights of Any: they know how to bear with the Failures of Adminiſtration, and the Exigences of Time, if not directly againſt the clear Light of Nature or of the Goſpel; and had rather chuſe to Acquieſce under ſome *burthenſome* Impoſitions, than to run the Riſque of diſturbing the Peace and Reſt of the Publick, either as to Church or State: they ſo fix their Hearts upon the *Magnalia Dei*, upon the Great Things of *God* and *Nature*, the deeply Myſtical Work of the *Regeneration* and *Aſcenſion* of Souls, the Manifeſtation of the *Spiritual* Kingdom of the *Meſſias*, the Diſcipline of *Divine Philoſophy* to her Children, the Glorious *Events* of the Future Bleſſed World; and the Gradual *Preparations* to it: that they hardly think thoſe little Things, (as they Appear to them to be when Compar'd with Theſe) which divide the greateſt part of Chriſtians, to be worth their Minding: and are not for ſetting a Value either upon the Superſtitions, or the Particularities of this or that Party: As they do not condemn the Externals or Rituals of the Chriſtian Religion, ſo far as they are made *Subſervient* to the Main Ends thereof, as Mortification, Juſtification, and the Communion of Chriſt with the Soul; ſo alſo do they not place ſo much in them, as to endanger by an Eager Contention *for* or *againſt* them, the Life, Power, and Energy of the Holy and Undefiled Religion of JESUS: they ſeek to Worſhip the Father, through his Son, in *Spirit* and *Truth*, in whatever Temple, or Place, they may appear as to their Outward Perſons; and Wait for that happy Day when all ſhall go up to Worſhip the *Lord* upon *one* Mountain, and in *one* Temple, being united into *one* Spirit: they are moſt tenderly Senſible of the Diſtractions, and Controverſies of Chriſtendom, at this Day; and Some of them being acquainted with the various Pretenſions of the Several Churches, with the Methods that

have been taken for the *Regulation*, or *Reformation* of the Chief of them both as to Diſcipline and Doctrine, and with the remaining Corruptions and Imperfections in them, after all Ordinary Means have been Try'd, have been hence ſtirr'd up to a diligent Reſearch after the Primitive and Original Model of the Church of Chriſt, while it *kept its firſt Love*, and to an Endeavour after the moſt Succeſsful Methods to retrieve the ſame, and to re-eſtabliſh the Catholick Unity in the Band of the Spirit, according to the Manifold and wiſe Diſtribution of its Paſtoral and Prophetical Gifts: They believe that all the Learning, Policy, and Power of Man are too Weak and Inefficacious to undertake ſo Great a Work as the Reformation and Re-union of Religion; and therefore are not without hopes of the Extraordinary Appearance of God in an Affair of ſo High an Import: They know that the Divine Wiſdom has made frequently uſe of the moſt frail and deſpicable Inſtruments, to bring the greateſt Revolutions about in the World, and has thought fit to effect the moſt glorious Atchievments through thoſe that have been counted as the Dung of the Earth; hence they are perſwaded that God will confound all the Wiſdom and Strength of Man by the moſt Myſterious Stratagem of his Providence, and that he will make All Fleſh to be Aſham'd by thoſe Secret Springs of his Spirit which are *Now* at Work: They have continually before their eye the *three* peculiar (and moſt comprehenſive) Titles of the Founder of the *Philadelphian* Church, and are of the Opinion that they are all Communicable to every Member of it, when they ſhall be fitly Purify'd, and Prepar'd for ſuch an Inauguration: This they ſay muſt be by the Reſidence of the *Glory of God* (or the Divine *Schecinah*) *within the Soul*, variouſly diſplaying and manifeſting itſelf: which is alſo what they call the *Internal* Revelation of the *Kingdom of Chriſt*; and is what according to the moſt Perfect Directory of all Prayer, they ſuppoſe themſelves to be obliged Daily to Petition their Eternal Father for, and to perſue after by holy Watchings, Abſtractions, and Recollection of Mind.

By all this, I hope you may be able to give a tolerable Judgment, *What* theſe *Philadelphians* are, and what they *would* be.. But if what has been already offer'd be not Satisfaction enough, and you ſtill perſiſt to demand *Where*, and *Who* they are, I muſt beg leave, for ſeveral weighty Reaſons, not to be too Open here, till I ſhall have a ſufficient Warrant for ſuch a Publication. But in ſhort, I would

would not have you to look for the *Philadelphian Society* among that little Company which doth generally pass by that Name, and is resorted to as such. For this Society doth not properly consist of those who meet together for Religious Worship at such certain Times, and in such a peculiar Manner. No, it is not confin'd to these: but it doth consist of as many as are Fellow Waiters for the same glorious Prize of the first Resurrection, and the high Immunities of the *New Jerusalem*-State; though they never convers'd much with them, nor ever saw one Book or Paper of this kind, or have so much as heard of the very Name of *Philadelphian*. The Society consists of all those who sincerely Pray and Labour for better Times, of all who bear the Testimony of *Jesus*, which is the Spirit of Prophesie, and the Spirit of *Wisdom* and of *Revelation*; and of all those who in the Patience of the Kingdom of our Lord and Mighty Saviour do suffer Tribulation and Reproach. The Number of whom may not be so small, as it may appear to be: and we dare not say that we are *Alone*, or that Our Society is made up of such a little Handful. For I do not despair but that there may be *Seven Thousand Undefil'd Names* found in this Nation, that shall be numbred with the *Philadelphian* Society, when a publick and Declarative Inquisition shall be made by the Searcher of all Hearts. The numbers of this Society in other Countries may be more Considerable, then is at first easie to be believ'd. The first Motion or Eruption of it may be said to have been in *Germany*, where it has spread it self chiefly through the indefatigable Zeal of some of the Clergy; under the Name of PIETISM. By which a Foundation has been there laid for a greater *Spirituality* in the *Christian* Profession then was before Known, or Entertain'd, except by some few: and for a greater Propagation thereof among well dispos'd *Souls*, then was from the Miraculous Days of the Church until that Day. The Advancement that it has already made in a very few Years is so Considerable, that it much alarm'd a Great and Potent Prince, who is since gone to his Fathers. Nor is it unknown, I suppose, to the World how great a Mediation did then interpose for the Revocation of that Prince's Designs. Concerning which it cannot be deny'd, but that they had a very good Umbrage, several plausible Pretexts, and Reasons of State; considering that the Worst Men will often take up the best Names; and that even those who are sincere and well-meaning may be attended with many (and sometimes great) Imperfections, and not

only with Erroneous, but with Deſtructive Notions; ſome of them for a ſhorter, others for a longer while, and ſome it may be even for their whole Lives: and conſidering likewiſe that ſome leſſer Exorbitances of Practice actually were, and others yet greater might have been committed, by ſuch as, not having been Taught by the True Guide, had learn'd to attribute their vain and turbulent Enthuſiaſms to the Holy Spirit of God. But though we cannot anſwer for the Irregularities, of all that may take up the ſame Title, or Name, with us, or with our Brethren in *Germany*; yet we doubt not but we ſhall approve our Selves, in the ſight of Heaven, and of all the World, as thoſe who follow the true *Spiritual Guide*, the Meek and Humble JESUS. Who has taught us to Pray and Wait diligently for his Appearance; that he may not ſurprize us, when he comes, without *Oil* in our Veſſels.

I know not what ſtreſs may be laid upon the Obſervations which ſome curious Perſons have concerning certain Places, which they ſuppoſe to be Conſiderable for certain Fatal (which I muſt rather call *Providential*) Propenſions, certain *Critical* Diſpoſitions, and *Periodical* Mutations in the Inhabitants; and particularly with reſpect to the Progreſs of Religion in the World. But however it be, the place of this late Eruption (if I may ſo call it) of a Solid, Nervous, and Spiritual Chriſtianity, in the *Pietiſt* Divines, that are truly ſo call'd, is indeed very Singular and ſtrange: and whatever Reflexion may be made hereby upon it, or upon this Society, deſerves not to paſs unobſerv'd. It is now ſomewhat above a Century and an half ſince there began in *Germany*, and (what is ſtill more remarkable) out of *Saxony*, that Grand Revolution of Religion, which by the beſt allow'd Expoſitors of Prophetical Scripture is call'd the *Sardian Reformation*, in Contradiſtinction to the expected *Philadelphian*: and it ſeems a little wonderful that now again ſomething of a like Scene, ſhould begin ſo to be Tranſacted about the ſame Place; and that as there were then many Circumſtances which did concur towards ſo ſurprizing and aſtoniſhing a Work, ſo alſo at this Day they There are not lacking, if our Informations deceive us not. And further, as the *Engliſh* are a Branch from the *German* Root, ſo ſome have obſerv'd a Circulation as it were from the Root to the Branch, and from the Branch to the Root again, in various particulars. Moreover at the ſame time that Dr. *Luther* preach'd in *Germany* againſt the Corruptions of the Court and Church of *Rome*, there ſtood up others at the ſame time

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in *Switzerland*, who persued there the same Design, with some little Alteration. So it is also at this Day.

Neither are the *Philadelphian Society* without their Friends in *Roman Catholick* Countries, as well as in *Protestant*. It is no longer now a Mystery ho / the Clergy of the *Gallican* Church, and that even too the most considerable for Learning and Prudence, as well as for Piety, are Ting'd with the very same Principles upon which this Society is Founded. Some hints whereof were given above two Years ago in a Preface of the *English* Editor, before a Book Translated out of the *High German*, and call'd, *A Letter to some Divines concerning the Question*, Whether God since Christ's Ascension doth any more reveal himself to Mankind? And it begins to be notorious enough, that this Spiritual Devotion prevails not only among the Recluse and the Regulars, but even among Seculars, and such as converse both in the World and in the Court. And it is Observable, that even that very Cardinal, who did lay the Foundation of the Grandeur of *France*, was a Favourer of such Principles of Devotion: and has left under his own Hand a lasting Monument of such his Esteem, by taking the Pains to Abridge them in a particular Treatise, that is deservedly valu'd by Rationalists as well as Spiritualists. Which shews that the cleerest Heads have fallen into this Way, and that the Wisest Ministers of State have not thought it of such pernicious Consequence (as some do vainly surmise) to the Civil Government.

What Emotions there have been of late Years in *Italy*, and in the Kingdom of *Naples*, as I dare not undertake to justifie the purity of the Source whence they proceeded; so they are too well known to be insisted on. But thus much at least may hence be gather'd, that there is generally a great Uneasiness under the Burthens of the Dominant Church in those Parts; and that there are some good Souls dispers'd who would gladly embrace a more Spiritual Religion, over-looking the outward Strength and Pomp of a Church State in Comparison of the *Inward Life and Spirit of the Gospel*.

Which is that whereby the *Philadelphians* desire that their Society may be distinguish'd. And therefore *when* in the *Title* Page of the *Theosophical Transactions* you find under-written *By the Philadelphian Society*, you are not thence to ascribe or appropriate these to such as wear the Badge of that Society in this City, or to imagin to your self that they are the *Acts* of any particular Convocation, or Assem-

Assembly, of such Members: but you are to consider them as the *Acts*, which relate to the whole Philadelphian Society, whither soever dispers'd over the whole Earth, (according as the *Message* directed to them the last Year did signifie) and publish'd by some that are of the same Society in *England*, who aspire after the inward Life and Spirit of Religion.

Well, you will say, the inward Life and Operative Spirit of the Religion of Christ is what we acknowledge to be the Principal, as well as they. Herein I find that we do not Disagree. This therefore (besides that it is invisible) can be no distinctive Mark either of their Society in general, or of the particular Society in *England*. *How* therefore *are they distinguish'd from other Christians*:

And particularly from those of the Church *of* England?

I can here tell you that they seek not to distinguish themselves from others, and that the Rule they go by will not suffer them to affect either *Singularity*, or *Superiority*: but that they seek rather (as far as it is in their Power) not to be distinguish'd from other Christians; and more affect an *Universality*, and generous and noble *Parity*, without encouraging the Sin of Schism by the one, or throwing waste by the other those Boundaries which the Laws either Divine, or Human, have establish'd. They pretend not to determine the Rights of the contending Parties, but leave all things *in Statu Quo*; without so much as entring into the merit of the Cause of the one or of the other. For they hope, that if the Dissenting Parties, or Societies, could be perswaded not to hate one another, and to retire more into the inward meek Life of JESUS, Matters might possibly come to be amicably adjusted on both sides, and a lasting Union in Religion concluded not only among Protestants, but even with the whole Christian World. Therefore they freely admit to them those that have a good Will to the Gospel of Christ, and seek to be conform'd to it in a Pure, Lowly, Loving and Peaceable Life, and in all other Matters so far as their Light extends; of whatever different Perswasions, or Opinions, they may be, which touch not the *Essentials* of the *Christian* Religion. And let me tell you they are so much for *Peace*, that they would have nothing but *these* to stand in competition with it: and *these* neither but so far as that *Peace* and *Truth* may be brought by this Means to kiss each other. They look beyond the most perfect external

ternal Conſtitution, as ſeeing that all muſt be Broken, to make way for that Pure and Spiritual Church-State, which is to deſcend immediately out of Heaven, according to the Repreſentation that we have given us in the Holy Viſions of the highly Beloved *John*. And, methinks, even while I am writing this, I ſee darkly as through a Glaſs this Angel of the Love deſcending as from the Holy City, and gently ſtriking ſome of the more eminent Paſtors of the Eſtabliſh'd Church of this Nation, and ſaying as it were to them, 'Ariſe: 'here is no Abiding Place. There remains yet a more Glorious 'Work to be done, than your Predeceſſors could accompliſh.

How are they diſtinguiſh'd from Quakers?

I anſwer, they do indeed agree with the Quakers, though not as to their external Habits, or Cuſtoms, yet as to the *Internal Principle of a Light within*. But herein alſo, if I miſtake not, they agree not only with moſt of the Reformed Churches, but even with the Church of *England* it ſelf: Who do no leſs own this Internal Light, or Divine Principle, when rightly Explicated, then the Quakers themſelves; and who do no leſs lay down ſuch Grounds, both in their Articles and Liturgy, from which a Spirit of Revelation, or Inſpiration, in the Church, may be eaſily and fully deduced. I know not, Sir, of what Communion you are, becauſe you ſpeak in General Terms (ſomewhat Ambiguous) of the *Proteſtant Churches*: but I am perſwaded that I can prove this to any impartial Perſon of what Communion you pleaſe, that is not perfectly a *Socinian*, or a *Pelagian*, if he will but ſtick to the Principles which he holds, and be content to follow, where they will lead him. But I chuſe rather to ſpeak of the Church of *England*, who are uſually (and I think moſt unfairly) miſ-repreſented as little Favourers of this internal Principle, of a Spiritual and Divine Light communicated to the Soul. I ſpeak as to their *Principles*: And if they will but be true to *theſe*, as I charitably hope they are, they ſhall perhaps admire to find the Ground work of *that* among themſelves, which they may have never thought of, or which they may have even thought themſelves to be contrary to. Neither ſhall I for this purpoſe refer any Man to ſeveral of the moſt celebrated Writers of this Church, ever ſince its Reformation; from whence I could bring many pregnant Proofs of the Truth of this Internal Principle, and Light within, as by them

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maintain'd: But I ſhall appeal to the moſt Authentical Acts of its Communion, and the moſt ſolemn and conſtant Offices, in which all its Members are oblig'd to joyn, for a Determination of the Faith of this Church. Wherefore I ſhall make my Inquiſition according to theſe Heads, *viz.*

I. The Manner of the Initiation of its Church Members.
II. The Manner of the Aſſociation of its Initiated Membets.
III. The Manner of Commiſſionating its Officers.
IV. The Daily Miniſtration, in which both the Church-Governours and Subjects are jointly concern'd.
V. The Commemorations of the Apoſtles.

I. *The manner of the Initiation of its Church Members.* This certainly ought to be allow'd as the Teſt of the Faith of any Church, or Chriſtian Society. And moſt eſpecially ſo it ought to be of that Church, or Society, in that Point, or Points, which it has hereby an immediate Reſpect to; and ſo much the more ſtill if this be of only the Immediate, but alſo the Principal Reſpect, whence in the Initiation that the Church of *England* uſes for the Admiſſion of its Members, if it ſhall appear that this Church has by it an *Immediate* and *Principal* Reſpect to the Internal Principle of a Light within, I hope none will be unwilling to ſubmit to it, who would be thought *Verily* and *Indeed* Members of it. Now the manner of Initiation of Members us'd by the Church of *England* doth conſiſt in the Office of *Baptiſm*, and in that of *Confirmation*: which is a Supplement, and Conſummation of the former. And that the Infuſion of an Internal Permanent *Light*, *Life*, or *Spirit*, (not barely for *Actual* Influences, but alſo for *Habitual* Reſidence) is the *Principal* End of Baptiſm, and which ſhe has an Immediate Reſpect to in theſe her Offices may be collected from the following Conſiderations. 1. That there is a Baptiſmal *Illumination* maintain'd and defended by the very Miniſters of it: and that from this Topick their ſtrongeſt Arguments are drawn againſt thoſe who diſpute the Validity either of Baptiſm in General, or of that of Infants in particular. It matters not here whether there be *indeed* ſuch a Baptiſmal Illumination, or that it be only believ'd to be ſo: for 'tis enough that they argue conſiſtently with their own Principles; however they may afterwards modifie or qualifie the ſame in their Controverſies with others. For this they find themſelves oblig'd to, as often as they have to do with thoſe who moſt loudly

loudly pretend to this Illumination of the Divine Spirit, or Word, 'ingenerated into 'em, as a Vital and Habitual Principle, or as a 'permanent *Light within*, variously and occasionally exerting it self 'in actual Influences Ordinary and Extraordinary; as in to m ny 'Rays of Light proceeding from that *Life* of Light. And that most chiefly because these do assert the Communication or Infusion hereof to be without the Ministration of External Baptism; which they therefore lay aside. 2. That *Baptism* and *Illumination* are taken by many for Synonymous Terms: and that the most Classical Expositors and Commentators of this Church do make them that are said to have been *Enlightned*, to be only the *Baptized*. And it is by some suppos'd that the Internal Light of Baptism, did in the early Days of its Administration break forth even externally, by a visible Coruscation. Several Instances are brought for the proof of this *Internal* Principle of the Spiritual *Light*, convey'd in *Baptism*: which, with what further Arguments might be drawn from the Rights of several Churches, and some particular Customs of our Ancestors, I pass over. 3. That *Regeneration* (which must be not a *new Modification*, but a *new Generation*) is attributed to the reception of Baptism: That the Subject upon which it is confer'd is thence call'd a *Member of Christ*; to signifie that as really as every Member of the natural Body is quickened and influene'd by the Natural Soul, so really is every Member of Christ's Spiritual (and Mystical) Body, quicken'd and influene'd by that Supernatural and Spiritual Principle, which is then suppos'd to be first infused; as it were a new and higher Soul, or an inward Vital Light: That thence the said Subject is call'd *a Child of God*; which is not properly Applicable to any Creature, as such, but solely to Christ, who is the *only Begotten* Son of the Father; but improperly and mediately to the Creature, so far as it is animated with the Spirit of the *Son*, which teaches it to cry *Abba Father*; so far as it is made *partaker* with him of the *Divine Nature*; so far as it is fill'd with the Universal Light of all Worlds, enlightning every one that comes to it; and so far lastly as *Christ is formed* within it, who is alone the *Heir* of the Father, and the *Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*. And that this Regeneration by, and into, the Spirit of Christ is to be counted for another Generation or Birth, and not a bare Modification, or Alteration of the *first*, (but much less an external *Relation*) may be sufficiently evinced both from the Argumentation of St. *Paul* in his Epistles, and from the Collects thence fitly adapted

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ted by the Judicious Compilers of the *English* Liturgy. This is also most agreeable to the very Original Institution of Baptism among the *Jews*, for the initiating of their Proselytes: in which they did conceive that a *New Soul* was actually infus'd that, was only capable of Immortality, and of the Kingdom of the *Messias*: as it is also to that of the *Purgative Mysteries* among the *Pythagoreans*, which do answer to the Christian Baptism; according to what a most Learned Vindicator of this Church has prov'd. To conclude, the conveyance of such an Internal Principle, whether you call it the *Light within*, or whatever other Name you give to it, is that which the Church of *England*, from these Considerations, appears to have an *Immediate* Respect to, in her Baptism, whether it be of Infants or of Adults; as that whereby the Subject so admitted is conceiv'd to be instated in all the Church Priviledges: which must be *Mediately* convey'd through this inward Principle of the *Light*. And it is that also to which the Church of *England* has the *Principal* Respect; as being that to which all other Regards are to be subservient and subordinate; as deriv'd from it, and centring in it. So that this may be safely allow'd as a Test of the Faith of a True Church of *England* Man; who by virtue of his Initiation into it is no less oblig'd to believe this inspired Light in the Soul, then a Quaker is. And if there be but such an internal Principle once in the Soul, then there can be no possible Reason assign'd why also there may not be true *Inspiration*, and *Revelation*, as the actual Influences and Operations of that Principle. Several other Considerations might here be brought, to conclude this to be the Reason of such a solemn Rite of Initiation into the Church and withal to shew that no Abuse of any Truth should make us asham'd to profess it; though we ought hereby to become more Wary, and Tender, and fearful of *Abusing* it when we *have*, or *pretending* to it when we have it *not*. But I must hasten to the other Heads. Which I must handle with more Brevity for the present. The Second is

II. The Manner of the Association of its Initiated Members.

If the former Supposition be True that the External Baptism of the Church of *England* is founded upon the Internal Baptism of the Holy Spirit, or upon the Infusion into the Baptized Person of a New Life, Light, or Spirit; then will not this latter need to be prov'd,

prov'd, Namely, that the *Eucharistical* Celebration in this same Church is grounded upon the Sustentation and Augmentation hereof, and is design'd for a mutual *Confederation* of all its Church-Members in the Holy and Spiritual Principle of the Divine Paradisiacal *Life*, in the *Light* of the Eternal *Wisdom* of God, and in the True Spirit of Christ. Let but *the Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion* be look'd into, and impartially Examined, how far it may Agree or Disagree with this Notion of *real* and *proper* Union with God and Christ, and of *Essential* Communion in the Spirit, by all the Participant Members. This will be the ready way to Decide the Matter: and that even independently on *Baptismal* Regeneration. And indeed I hardly know what *can* be said more Nervous, and Full to this Purpose, or that *would* be said with greater Force by the very sublimest Mysticks, then what I find in the *Exhortation*: which being Preparatory and Instructive, ought therefore to be taken according to the most *Popular* and *Literal* Sense. The Words that I observe are these, which are (as I have already hinted) peculiarly Address'd to the Unlearned rather then to the Learned; to the *Idiot*, rather then to the Philologist: viz. *Then we Spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ, and Drink his Blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.* In which Words there are these three things Doctrinally Deliver'd. 1. A Spiritual Manducation of the Flesh and Blood of Christ; concerning which the *Philadelphians* have many things to say that cannot be declared among the Exotericks. 2. A mutual *Inhabitation*, or *Circumincession*, of Christ and the Soul. 3. A Reciprocal *Union*, or Communication (as the Schools speak) of Idioms. There seems indeed to be a Limitation to the First of these by the Term *Spiritually*: but that is only oppos'd to *Carnally*, and not to *Really*, or *Substantially*. And it is further also observable that the Catechumens are not to be admitted to the Participation of so High a *Mystery*, but after a Profession made, that *the Body and Blood of Christ are* herein *Verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful.* Which howsoever it be Explicated, if it signifie any thing at all, must import that the Doctrine of a *Christ within*, or a *Light within*, as a Vital Principle in the Soul of every Worthy Participant, is not contrary, but exactly conformable to the Rites of Association, or Confederation, of its Initiated Members. So I proceed to

III. The Manner of Commiſſionating its Officers.

And here the Church of *England* ſeems to be more Expreſs, then ſhe is either in the Forms of *Initiating*, or *Aſſociating* her Subjects. For the Offices both for the *Ordination* of her *Prieſts* and *Deacons*, and for the *Conſecration* of her *Biſhops*, do wholly turn upon this one Principle, that none ought to be admitted for Officers, or Rulers, in the Church of Chriſt, but thoſe that are truly *Call'd* by the *Spirit* of Chriſt to that particular Office or Government in the ſame: and that as a Conſequent hereof none ought to preſume to Exerciſe ſuch an Office or Government in the Church, but according as they ſhall be fill'd, actuated, and guided by this Internal Spirit and Light of Chriſt, the ſupreme Paſtor, and Head of it. Which may be made, I think, moſt Evident. 1. From that Part, which the Perſons *Commiſſionating* do bear in this Sacred Miniſtration. 2ly. From that which the Perſons *Commiſſionated* do bear. 3ly. From the Contents of the *Commiſſion* it ſelf, that is Deliver'd. 4ly. From the Rite of the *Delivery* of the Commiſſion, or the Impoſition of Hands. And 5ly. from that part which all the *Aſſiſtants*, whether of the Clergy or of the Layety, do bear. And the Evidence in all theſe Particulars will be very clear from the moſt natural and plain Senſe of the Words and Symbolical Rites then us'd, without ſtraining or diſtorting them either way, but taking them according to the ordinary Conſtruction throughout the whole New Teſtament, and the moſt Primitive Antiquity. From whence alone we can know, what it was to be *Call'd* and *Mov'd* by the *Spirit* to any Office, or Miniſtration in the Church: and what are properly to be underſtood by the Paſtoral, or Doctoral Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. And further yet to prove how ſenſible ſhe is of the great need that there is of *Inſpired* and *Enlightn'd* Teachers in the Church, this very Church of *England* doth thrice every Week ſolemnly ſupplicate the Bleſſed Trinity *to ILLUMINATE all Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons.*

IV. The Daily Miniſtration, in which both the Church-Governors and Subjects are jointly Concern'd.

The Church of *England* doth not only teach her Children *Occaſionally* to Pray the Father, through the Son, for the *Inſpiration* of his Holy *Spirit*; and inſtructs them every Lord's Day, and Holy Day, how that without this Divine Inſpiration, or Illumination, the *Love* of God cannot be *perfect*, neither the *Glorification* of his *Name* ſuitable, or *Worthy*: But ſhe doth the ſame alſo in her *Conſtant* Offices. For do not her Children beg of Chriſt in the firſt place, that he *may open* their *Lips*, ſo that they may be able to *ſhew forth* his *Praiſe*; after the manner that the *Inſpired* Prophets did, when their Mouths were open'd by the Lord? Do they not as from this *Opening* proceed on, in Conjunction with the goodly Society, of the *Prophets*, the Heroical *Army* of *Martyrs*, and the glorious *Colledge* of the *Apoſtles*; and with all the Angelical Orders; to *Praiſe* the LORD; that is, after the ſame Manner as they do, in his Life, Light, and Power. Wherefore alſo doth the Miniſter ſalute the People with the Salutation of the Angel *Gabriel*: and the People reſalute the Miniſter with a *Lord be with thy Spirit*; that is, that the Spirit of the *Lord* (as *Immanu-El*) may be joyn'd with *his* Spirit in his Miniſterial Offices then to be perform'd? And wherefore do they both mutually Deprecate the *Removal* of the Divine Spirit, but that they may be aſſiſted by it, as an inherent Principle of Light, how they ought to *Pray* unto, and *Praiſe* him? Do they not therefore Approve of *Prayer* by the *Spirit*? Yea do they not even remind God of thoſe Noble and Miraculous Works, that have been wrought by his Spirit, both Internally and Externally, in former Days? And do they not preſs him to *Ariſe*, and *Help* them, as Antiently in the Church he was us'd to do: and to deliver 'em by ſome Wonderful and Extraordinary Appearances? And why do they tell him that his Honour is ſo concern'd to do: than which nothing can be more proper in the Mouth of a *Philadelphian*?

V. The Commemorations of the Apostles.

But as there are several Footsteps of this Doctrine of an Internal Principle of Light, which the *Philadelphians* strenuously maintain, Obvious in the *Daily* Ministration of the Church of *England*, wherein both Governors and Subjects are concern'd; so there is yet somewhat still more Notable in the Commemorations of the Holy Apostles by her Celebrated. For the very Original Institution of these seems to be for no other End but to preserve an Useful Memorial of their Deeds and Sufferings, and of the great and excellent Gifts of the Holy Spirit, conferr'd upon 'em; that so the Present Church, and especially its Officers, may be hereby incited to insist in their Steps; and so to hope for the Powerful Communications of the same Blessed Spirit, in order to a *Right* Government of It. And I do not see why a Church of *England* Man, as Such, may not pray to be *Enlighten'd*, by the Doctrine of the Holy Apostle, and Evangelist St. *John*, who treats so particularly of the *Divine Light*; to be made a *Partaker* of the *Gifts* and *Powers* of the World to come, through the Preaching and Epistles, of the Blessed Apostle St. *Paul*, who has spoken so distinctly concerning them; and to be endued with those *Pastoral* Abilities, which were by Christ committed to the Glorious Apostle St *Peter*, that so the Bishops, and Pastors, may be enabled (like him) to *feed the Flocks*, entrusted to their Charge. Neither do I see, why any Church of *England* Man may not safely Pray to be *filled with the Holy Ghost*, for a right Judgment in all Sacred Matters, when he commemorates the plentiful Effusion of it upon all the Apostles: or why, in particular, he may not wait in Faith for such a *Fulness* of it, as was given to the first Martyr St. *Stephen*: or why stedfastly looking up to Heaven, he may not also hope to behold the *Revelation* of the same *Glory*: or lastly, why, being establish'd in the Truth of the same *Gospel*, he may not expect that, as God did endue his Holy Apostle *Barnabas* with *Singular* and Marvellous *Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, he will not leave him destitute of such his Manifold *Gifts*, (if they be Pray'd for, and Believ'd in) nor yet of *Grace* to use them aright.

Now

Now from a ſincere Inquiſition upon all theſe Heads I have been driven ro conclude, that the Church of *England*, according to her *Principles*, and alſo to her Solemn and Conſtant Devotions, doth no leſs favour the Internal Principle of a Divine Light, when rightly ſtated, then even thoſe who are at this Day the moſt of all Exclaim'd againſt for it. Each of theſe Heads might have been much more largely Deduced: and others alſo might eaſily have been Added. But if all this ſhould not be Satisfactory, I have yet a Reſerve behind: which I am ready to produce, if there ſhall be occaſion for it, to juſtifie the Principles as of the Catholick Church, ſo of the Church of *Engl nd* in this Point.

'Very well, you will ſay: I deſir'd to know, how the *Philadel-*'*phians* are diſtinguiſh'd from the *Quakers*; and you tell me that 'they are *not* diſtinguiſh'd from Them, neither from the Church 'of *England* it ſelf, as to the Grand Point of the *Internal Light*. 'But then, ſay you, why do not theſe diſtinctly ſtate what they 'mean by it; which is ſo capable of being miſunderſtood, 'and ſo liable to be Abus'd? This, if it can be done, will an-'ſwer the Intent of that Queſtion, concerning their Diſcriminati-'on from the Quakers.

I anſwer, that the *Philadelphians* do ſtate it, after the ſame manner as *Juſtin Martyr*, and the moſt Early, and Soundeſt, Writers of the Catholick Church. They will refer you therefore to theſe, with whom they expreſs their full Concurrence: who, they ſay, were not ſuch Enemies either to a Publick, or Private Spirit of *Revelation*, as the Moderns commonly ſeem to be. But theſe are the more to be excus'd, in that the Exceſſes of ſome wild Pretenders to Inſpiration have been ſo Enormous, within our own Memory, as to warp many ſober Minds too much to the other ſide. Whereof this Society being ſenſible, they ſtudy no leſs to guard themſelves againſt the Quick-ſands of *Credulity*, then againſt the Rock of *Incredulity*. Wherefore though they *deſpiſe not Propheſying*; yet they *examine all things*, and will have the Spirit of Propheſie to be *try'd* by the *Prophets*. Neither do they receive it but according to theſe Limitations: *viz.*

I. No *Private* is to oppoſe its ſelf to a *Publick* Spirit of *Revelation*.

II. No Private Spirit of Revelation is to oppose it self to a Publick Constitution; though it be not of Immediate Divine Appointment. [Where by *Publick Constitution* I mean both the Civil and Ecclesiastical Power: and by *Opposing* it, I mean the Usurpation of a Supreme Dictatorial Power, which would oblige the Consciences of others.]

III. The Scriptures, according to the Canon thereof by us receiv'd, are a Compleat Rule to the Church, both with Respect to *Faith*, and *Manners*: and is therefore to be the Standard of all Succeeding Revelations, or Inspirations.

IV. No Private Spirit of Revelation has a Right to set up a *New* Rule, but only to *Interpret* the former; and even that but for its own Private use, and for that of as many as shall be convinc'd of the Truth of it.

V. The Truth of the *History* of Holy Scripture must remain inviolable: and must not be taken away, or diminish'd, by any Mystical *Interpretations* whatever.

VI. Every pretended Spirit of Revelation that confesses not the *Cross* of JESUS of *Nazareth*: or that would find out Another *Jesus*, must be *Anathema*.

VII. The true Spirit of Revelation cannot abide with any but Holy and Humble Souls.

According to these Restrictions and Limitations They can judge of a Spirit of Revelation, either in themselves, or in others; whether it be True, or False; whether it be Good, Bad, or Mixt. And if they cannot so perfectly judge in this Case, they leave it as it is; without daring either positively to Accept, or Reject it: until the Light shall break so clearly up, as to dispell all Doubts. According also to these Restrictions They do judge of the Principles, and the Practices, which are said to have been dictated, or directed, by Divine Inspiration: and do leave others to do so likewise. But of these you may see more in some Experienc'd Mystics, who have written concerning the *Discernment of Spirits*: and in the Occasional Writings of Some of their Society, but especially in the *Editors* Preface, before the Second Volume of Mrs. *Leads* Fountain of Gardens, with respect to some Books of that Author lately sent abroad.

And here I might speak to the Query concerning the Peculiar Principles and Practices of the *Philadelphians*; as which are said to be either Founded upon, or Confirm'd by such a Spirit of Revela-

yelation in ſome private Perſons. But ſince they do not impoſe them on others, I ſhall beg leave to paſs 'em over at this time. So I ſhall only deliver you my Thoughts of that ſingular Opinion of Theirs, known by you, *That the Coming of Chriſt is near at Hand.* You ſay you could not diſcern from what Topicks They could fetch their Evidence: For it cannot be found out by *Reaſon*; neither by *Private Revelation*, without a Sign; nor yet by the *Publick Revelation* of the Scriptures, which are by you ſuppos'd to make rather againſt, then for them. As to the firſt of theſe they grant that this Thing cannot be found out by it: but yet they are apt to think that when once it is Diſcover'd by *Revelation*, it may be *Rationally* Confirm'd by certain Phenomena in *Nature*. As to the Second, they chuſe rather to Wave, then abſolntely to lay it aſide. For they themſelves may poſſibly have an Internal Evidence hereof, without an External Sign, or Aſſurance to others: and therefore may be allow'd to *warn and awaken the World, that they may prepare againſt that Great and Solemn Time.* As with ſome Prophets it has been: who have been found to Act conformably to this *Internal* Evidence alone, and that with good Succeſs. But this I am Inform'd is under the Management of another Pen, upon whom this Task has been laid by a Perſon of very great Eminence.

But as to the Third, which is the Publick Revelation of the Scriptures, they are moſt willing to joyn Iſſue there. Notwithſtanding they diſtinguiſh in the firſt place, what they here mean by the *Coming of Chriſt*; and what by the *near Approach* of it. Now I do not find that by the Coming of Chriſt, when they ſay that it is *near*, they underſtand his Viſible Appearance in the Clouds: but a coming *in Spirit*, or in powerful Demonſtrations of the Holy Ghoſt, for the Edifying an Holy and Perfect Church upon the Earth, amidſt whom the *Living Oracle*, and the *Shecinah*, or Tabernacle of *Glory* may remain: that may be as the *Firſt Fruits* of a Full *Harveſt* afterward to be gather'd in. And by the *near Approach* of this *Spiritual* Coming of Chriſt, after an Extraordinary Manner, they mean no more but that the *Firſt* Breaking out of it is very nigh, (probably in this preſent Generation) becauſe there are already ſome Witneſſes hereof *rais'd up* in diverſe Countries; and that there ſhall be a *Gradual* Succeſſion and Augmentation of the ſame, till the whole Number of the *Firſt Born* be made up; ſo that the *After Born*, or the *Remnant of the Seed*, may in proceſs of time come alſo to be Admitted into the ſame Fold.

So that the Difficulties that are by you drawn from the 11th. and 16th. Chapters of the *Revelations* of St. *John*, do not ſo preſs the *Philadelphian Society*, as they may at firſt ſeem to do. For they grant that there are many things yet to be Accompliſh'd before that Great and *Perſonal* Coming of Chriſt in the Days of the the *Seventh* Trumpet; as relating to the Witneſſes, the Earthquake, the Fall of the Tenth Part of the City, the Second and Third Woe, *&c.* Neither do they diſpute, whether the Effuſion of the Seven Vials, be to be underſtood Myſtically, or Literally; or both ways: whether any of them be yet paſt, or whether all of them remain ſtill to be pour'd out: whether they be Gradual Preparations for a General Conflagration, or what elſe they may be. For the Foundation of this *Society* will ſtill continue the ſame: And though they ſhould not be able nicely to fix the Beginning of the Reign of *Anti-Chriſt*, yet they may be able to compute pretty well, that the Coming of Chriſt (as before Explicated) cannot now be *far off*.

For there are many Motives of Credibility, and Rational Preſumptions, which they draw from the Written Word of God, to confirm their Judgment in this Particular, of the nearneſs of the Reign of Chriſt in *Spirit*. I ſhall inſtance in one or two: which I ſhall leave you to deduce further. The firſt Motive therefore of Credibility for the near Approach of Chriſt in the Powers of his *Spirit*, I ſhall take from the Great Line of Eccleſiaſtical Time, which was given by the *Numberer of Secrets* to the Prophet *Daniel*, and was to expire with the Purification of the Sanctuary, which is the Reſtitution of the Church to its Primeval State. Now nothing more will want to be ſuppos'd here, but that according to the Prophetical Stile, a Day is taken for a Year. So that from the Date of the Viſion untill that Bleſſed Time, there were to paſs away two Thouſand and three Hundred Years. Now let us examine, if you pleaſe, whether theſe be yet drawing near to a Period. This will not be difficult to find out: ſince it ſhall not be neceſſary hereto to be very Nice in our Calculations. This we may be eaſily aſſur'd of, that *Daniel* Propheſied about Six Hundred Years before the Birth of Chriſt: and that the Date of this Viſion, which was in the third Year of the Reign of *Belſhazar* (call'd *Nebo Niddochus*) could not be above three or four Year more or leſs; according to the Computation of ſome Indifferent Perſons. Now if to Six Hundred you

shall add the Years, that are lapsed since Christ, you will find this Term allotted for the Purification of the Church to expire about the end of * this present Century. This gross Calculation will be sufficient for my Purpose, and for that of the *Society*. Since they are Sensible, that an exact Scrutiny into this Matter is of very great *Difficulty*; if not of absolute *Impossibility*: upon these Accounts, *viz.*

* 600
1700
—
2300

1. We cannot be certain of what Variation there may be in the Years, the odd Days in the space of seventy Years making up one Compleat Year. 2. We cannot be very Certain what may be the true *Æra* of Christ's Birth; some Chronologists placing it two, three, or even four Years higher or lower. 3. We cannot be certain what, or how long may be the *Shortening* of the Time, which is Promis'd. All which ought to make every one very Careful in Determinations of this Kind. But yet all due Allowances being made, the Distance will not be considerable: and the *Philadelphian* Society may well be excus'd for Alarming the World against such a solemn Day, as is drawing on, in order to prepare for it *by a good Life, Universal Charity, and Union among the Christian Churches.*

Another Motive of Credibility from Scripture-Revelation for the near Approach of a Great and Signal *Reformation* in the Church, according to the most perfect Model, I shall take from that most Antient Interpretation, or Application, (Generally Receiv'd by the Primitive Christians) of the *Seven Days* of the *Creation* and *Rest* of the World; the Seven Great Days, each containing a Thousand Years, which Allotment seems to be favour'd by no less a Person than St. *Peter*. Whence if there be, according to the known Tradition of one of the greatest Schools among the *Jews*, about two Thousand Years allow'd before the Law, as many under it; and as many after it, in the present Dispensation of the Christian Church; it will follow that as the *Seventh* Thousand Years are to be the Grand Sabbatical Day of this Our Orb; so the Preparation for it must be some proportionable Time before, in the *Sixth* Thousand, like as the *Jewish* Sabbath did begin upon the Evening of the *Sixth* Day; and according as it is Propheſy'd, *At Even tide it shall be light*. How long this Proportionable Time may be I do not fix: but I think it may be pretty nearly Calculated from the Type. However I shall not lay any greater stress upon such Typical, or Mystical Explications, though well grounded, than you are willing to allow them. Thus much at least I dare to rely on,

that it is not conteſted, to have been a very early, and a very ſpreading Belief in the Church.

There are ſeveral other Arguments and Motives, which may be extracted out of the Holy Scriptures, for the Authenticating ſuch a Belief as this. But becauſe in order to make them Convictive, ſome things muſt be previouſly Prov'd, which I will not beg to be Suppos'd; therefore I cannot make uſe of 'em at preſent. So I am neceſſitated to wait till the way be more clear'd: and what relates to the Courſe of the *Jubilees*, the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*, as alſo that of *Trumpets*, and the *Signs* of the Times I muſt paſs over; with ſome Chronological Diſquiſitions that might be too Intricate for the greateſt part of Readers, who love not to puzle themſelves with Difficulties of this Kind.

What relates to the Periodical Succeſſions of the Church, according to the Seven Typical Churches of *Aſia*; and eſpecially to the Period now about beginning: and to the Solution of that Queſtion, whether the Seventh and the Sixth be Concomitant, or Succeſſive States; I am oblig'd to conſider, (if God ſhall enable me by his Spirit, that *Searcheth the hidden things*) in Anſwer to ſome Queſtions lately ſent from a very Learned Querift. In the mean time I ſhall only ſay, that we now ſeem to be drawing near to an End of the *Sardian* State: and that the Weak Beginnings of the *Philadelphian* will concur with this, till it obtain more Strength, and the former be made to give place to it. For which Bleſſed Days to Watch and Pray is the Peculiar Employment of this Society: that ſo LOVE may triumph over all, unite all Breaches, cement all Ruptures, and reconcile all Differences; that amidſt all the Contending *Brethren*, who profeſs the Name of Chriſt, an Univerſal *Peace* may be eſtabliſh'd in which *Mercy* and *Truth* may meet each other; and that the Angelical Hoſts beholding the *Peace* of our *Jeruſalem*, may again Sing *Glory to God in the Higheſt*; and cry to each other, *How Good and how Pleaſant is it for* Brethren *thus to dwell together in Unity*!

This is the *Philadelphian Alarm*, which they have now begun to ſound: and will not give over to ſound, till the Revived Church of *Jeruſalem*, in *Philadelphia*, be Built *as a City that is compacted together*, by the indiſſoluble Knot of *Fraternal Love*. Neither are they afraid to *expoſe themſelves* for: ſo Excellent a Cauſe, as they have appear'd for: but do the more loudly redouble their Cry, *Ariſe, O ye Brethren, and let as go up together unto the* TESTIMONY *of Iſrael*,

Israel, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. For there do sit the Thrones of JUDGMENT.

And while I am but mentioning this, my Heart even burns within me for Zeal to our Common Country, that they may hear the Voice of this Cry, which is now sounded in their Ears: and may lay aside all little Animosities and Bitternesses; so agreeing to worship the Lord with one Lip and with one Heart, in Peace and Love without End.

Whether this may be thought Worthy of the Cognisance, or Consultations, of the Governors and Representatives of the Church Establish'd by Law, as also of the several Classes of Dissenting Brethren from her (who do not generally so much as pretend to Dissent, but for the Cause of greater *Purity* and *Spirituality*) I leave you, Sir, (and Them) to consider. And how far an Enterprise of this Nature, when freed from Mistaken Constructions, may be fit to be Promoted by Both; and how far it may also hope for the Favourable Concurrence at this time, and Encouragement of all *Reform'd* (if not of all *Christian*) Princes, and States; and (in a Special Manner) of Such Now Bearing the Key of the Government in this Kingdom, for some End yet reserv'd in God's Secret Cabinet; and particularly, of that Noble and Honourable Assembly which is Now Sitting, and Consulting the most Probable *Ways and Means* to Secure Peace and Prosperity to This Nation; If the said Enterprize shall be found Suitable and Proper to those Ends of the *Philadelphian Society* (at Home and Abroad) which have been Propos'd; I leave you also to consider, and the Supreme Mover of all Hearts to direct.

Thus have I freely open'd to you the Sence of this Society, and the Grounds of their Pretensions: And in what I have been defective you will do, Sir, an Acceptable Piece of Service in signifying it to

Your Humble Servant,

Philadelphus.

Second Message to the Philadelphian Society; and Touch-stone to the gather'd Churches. p. 107.

This is the PHILADELPHIAN Church which I must Proclaim; and which is already, in some Measure, Begun: And, though at first it has but a *little Strength*, and be Comparatively as a Grain of Mustard Seed, it shall spring up as a mighty Tree; whence the *Lebanon*-Glory, under the Shadow of it, will come to open, in Power and MAJESTY.

TOS

See Seder Olam. p. 147.

that it is not conteſted, to have been a very early, and a very ſpreading Belief in the Church.

There are ſeveral other Arguments and Motives, which may be extracted out of the Holy Scriptures, for the Authenticating ſuch a Belief as this. But becauſe in order to make them Convictive, ſome things muſt be previouſly Prov'd, which I will not beg to be Suppos'd; therefore I cannot make uſe of 'em at preſent. So I am neceſſitated to wait till the way be more clear'd: and what relates to the Courſe of the *Jubilees*, the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*, as alſo that of *Trumpets*, and the *Signs* of the Times I muſt paſs over; with ſome Chronological Diſquiſitions that might be too Intricate for the greateſt part of Readers, who love not to puzle themſelves with Difficulties of this Kind.

What relates to the Periodical Succeſſions of the Church, according to the Seven Typical Churches of *Aſia*; and eſpecially to the Period now about beginning: and to the Solution of that Queſtion, whether the Seventh and the Sixth be Concomitant, or Succeſſive States; I am oblig'd to conſider, (if God ſhall enable me by his Spirit, that *Searcheth the hidden things*) in Anſwer to ſome Queſtions lately ſent from a very Learned Querift. In the mean time I ſhall only ſay, that we now ſeem to be drawing near to an End of the *Sardian* State: and that the Weak Beginnings of the *Philadelphian* will concur with this, till it obtain more Strength, and the former be made to give place to it. For which Bleſſed Days to Watch and Pray is the Peculiar Employment of this Society: that ſo LOVE may triumph over all, unite all Breaches, cement all Ruptures, and reconcile all Differences; that amidſt all the Contending *Brethren*, who profeſs the Name of Chriſt, an Univerſal *Peace* may be eſtabliſh'd in which *Mercy* and *Truth* may meet each other; and that the Angelical Hoſts beholding the *Peace* of our *Jeruſalem*, may again Sing *Glory to God in the Higheſt*; and cry to each other, *How Good and how Pleaſant is it for* Brethren *thus to dwell together in Unity*!

This is the *Philadelphian Alarm*, which they have now begun to ſound: and will not give over to ſound, till the Revived Church of *Jeruſalem*, in *Philadelphia*, be Built *as a City that is compacted together*, by the indiſſoluble Knot of *Fraternal Love*. Neither are they afraid to *expoſe themſelves* for ſo Excellent a Cauſe, as they have appear'd for: but do the more loudly redouble their Cry, *Ariſe, O ye Brethren, and let us go up together unto the* TESTIMONY *of Iſrael*,

Israel, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. For there do sit the Thrones of JUDGMENT.

And while I am but mentioning this, my Heart even burns within me for Zeal to our Common Country, that they may hear the Voice of this Cry, which is now sounded in their Ears: and may lay aside all little Animosities and Bitternesses; so agreeing to worship the Lord with one Lip and with one Heart, in Peace and Love without End.

Whether this may be thought Worthy of the Cognisance, or Consultations, of the Governors and Representatives of the Church Establish'd by Law, as also of the several Classes of Dissenting Brethren from her (who do not generally so much as pretend to Dissent, but for the Cause of greater *Purity* and *Spirituality*) I leave you, Sir, (and Them) to consider. And how far an Enterprise of this Nature, when freed from Mistaken Constructions, may be fit to be Promoted by Both; and how far it may also hope for the Favourable Concurrence at this time, and Encouragement of all *Reform'd* (if not of all *Christian*) Princes, and States; and (in a Special Manner) of Such Now Bearing the Key of the Government in this Kingdom, for some End yet reserv'd in God's Secret Cabinet; and particularly, of that Noble and Honourable Assembly which is Now Sitting, and Consulting the most Probable *Ways and Means* to Secure Peace and Prosperity to This Nation; If the said Enterprize shall be found Suitable and Proper to those Ends of the *Philadelphian Society* (at Home and Abroad) which have been Propos'd; I leave you also to consider, and the Supreme Mover of all Hearts to direct.

Thus have I freely open'd to you the Sence of this Society, and the Grounds of their Pretensions: And in what I have been defective you will do, Sir, an Acceptable Piece of Service in signifying it to

Your Humble Servant,

Philadelphus.

Second Message to the Philadelphian Society; and Touch-stone to the gather'd Churches. p. 107.

This is the PHILADELPHIAN Church which I must Proclaim; and which is already, in some Measure, Begun: And, though at first it has but a *little Strength*, and be Comparatively as a Grain of Mustard Seed, it shall spring up as a mighty Tree; whence the *Lebanon*-Glory, under the Shadow of it, will come to open, in Power and MAJESTY. POST-

See Seder Olam. p. 147.

POST-SCRIPT.

SIR,

SInce these Sheets were gone to the Press there came to my Hand a Piece, call'd *Bourignianism Detected*; wherein I expected (from its more General Intent) to find something relating to the Pretensions of *This Society*. But the Learned and Ingenious Author gives one Comprehensive Blow at them, and many others. For he is pleas'd to say, That *Our* Quakers *and* Philadelphians, *as well as the* Quietists *and* Pietists *abroad, are of the same Kidney, and do all stand upon the same Foundation; so that what overturns one, overturns all.* They may have truly, for ought I know, the same *Resolution of Faith*: but whether this may involve all under the same Condemnation I leave you to consider. Sure I am that Our *Church of England* Men and *Presbyterians*, as well as the *Unitarians* and *Zuinglians* both at Home and Abroad, are not so very easily to be Wounded all by one Blow; though they pretend to stand all *upon one Foundation*, and do *Resolve* the Principles of their *Faith*, according to the same *Rule*. And notwithstanding the Principle of an *Internal Light* be that which all these do pretend to alike, yet none have written better, or with more Perspicuity and Solidity, against all *Enthusiastical Impostures and Delusions*, then they who have possess'd the same Principle; such as the Profound *Juan de la Cruz*, and several others. Let the Case of *Antonia Bourignon* be what it will, I desire that Justice may be done. And I hope to see her *True Character* undertaken by One, that is neither a Friend, nor an Adversary.

FINIS.

Books lately Publiſhed by ſome of the *Philadelphian Society.*

A *Letter to ſome Divines*, concerning the Queſtion, Whether God ſince Chriſt's Aſcenſion doth any more Reveal himſelf to Mankind by the Means of Divine Apparitions? With an Exact Account of what God had beſtowed upon a Noble Maid, from the Seventh Year until now. Written Originally in High Dutch 1695. Price 1 *s.*

The Laws of Paradiſe, Given forth by Wiſdom to a Tranſlated Spirit. 1695. Price 6 *d.*

The Wonders of God's Creation manifeſted in the Variety of *Eight Worlds*, as they were made known Experimentally to the Author *J. L.* 1695. Price 6 *d.*

The Meſſage of the Philadelphian Society, Whitherſoever diſperſed over the Whole Earth: With a Second Meſſage to the ſame Society and a Touchſtone to the Gathered Churches. By *J. Lead*, 1696. Price 6 *d.*

The Tree of Faith, or Tree of Life, ſpringing up in the Paradiſe of God. From which all the Wonders of the New Creation muſt proceed. To which is Added,

The Ark of Faith, as a Supplement to the Same, containing a Diſcovery of the *New World*. By *J. Lead*, 1696. Price Bound 1 *s.*

A Fountain of Gardens Watered by the Rivers of Divine Pleaſure, and Springing up in all the Variety of Spiritual Plants; blown up by the Pure Breath into a *Paradiſe*. To which is Prefixed a Poem, Introductory to the *Philadelphian* Age, call'd *Solomon's Porch* or the Beautiful Gate of *Wiſdom's* Temple, 1697. Price 4 *s.*

A Fountain of Gardens. Vol. II. Being a Continuation of the Proceſs of a Life according to Faith, of the Divinely Magical Knowledge, and of the New Creation, in Mutual Entertainments betwixt the Eſſential Wiſdom and the Soul in her Progreſs through *Paradiſe*, to Mount *Sion*, and to the New *Jeruſalem*; 1697. Price 4 *s.*

A

A Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel-Message, which shall never cease to be Preach'd till the Hour of Christ's Eternal Judgment shall come: Whereby will be Proclaim'd the Last Love-Jubilee, in order to the Restitution of the Whole Lapsed Creation, whether Human or Angelical, 1697. Price 6 *d.*

A New Years Gift, or a Token of Love to all Persons of what Perswasion soever. In three Parts. By *Mary Sterrell.*

An *Earnest* Call of the *Eternal Love* of God. Published in the Beginning of this 1696 Year in *High Dutch*, and Printed in *Amsterdam.* Price 4 *d.*

Theosophical Transactions, Number I. II. III.

Propositions extracted from the Reasons for the Foundation and Promotion of a *Philadelphian Society.* Price 3 *d.*

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Page 6 l. 13. *to you*, read *you to.*